

Organizing and Managing  
comparative surveys in a TSE  
perspective  
*- Some episodic insights -*

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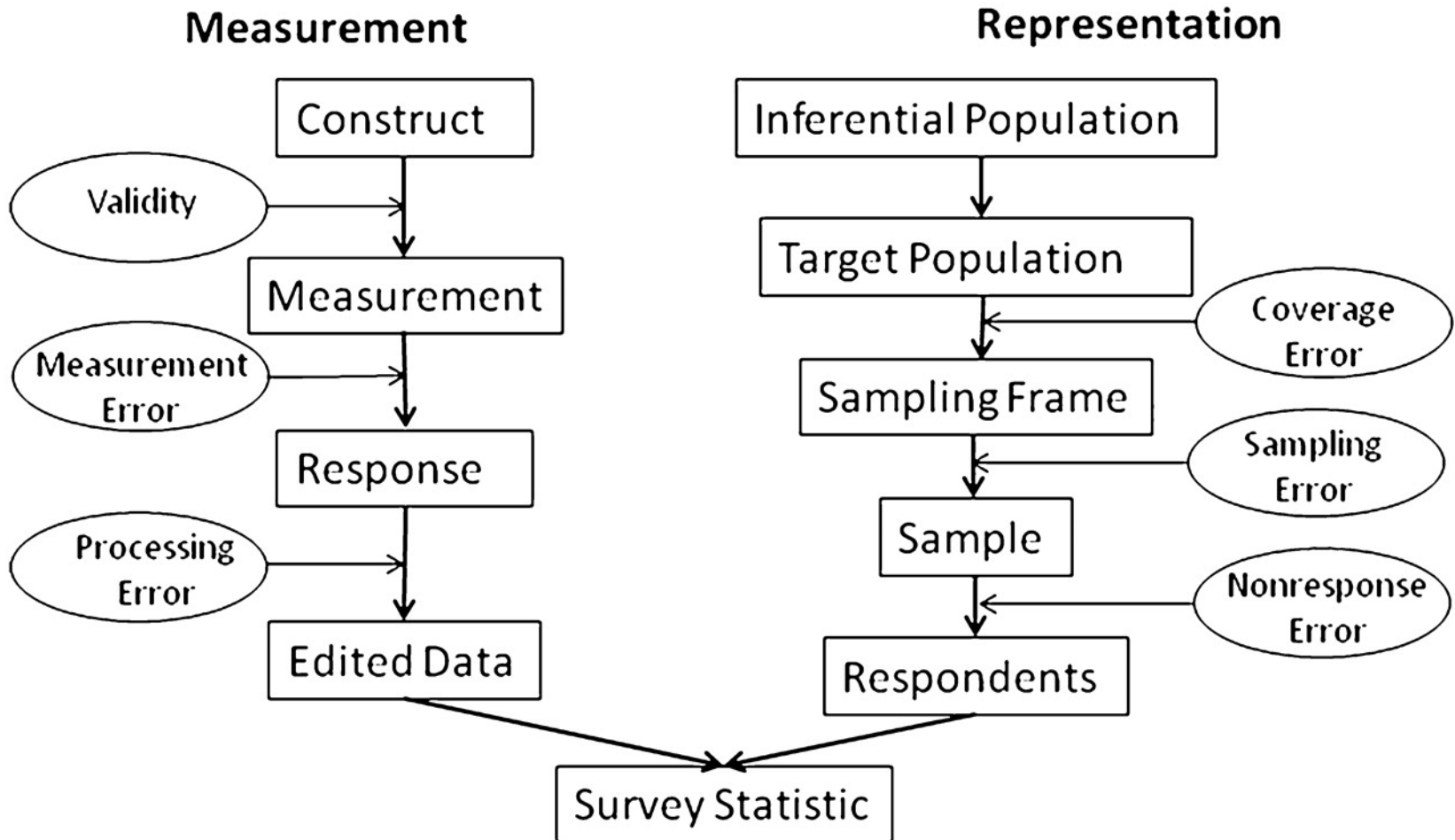
# Take home messages

- **3MC: multi-site enterprise**
- **3MC: multi-cultural management**
- **3MC: bad management detrimental**
- **3MC: complex, high-tech scientific business**

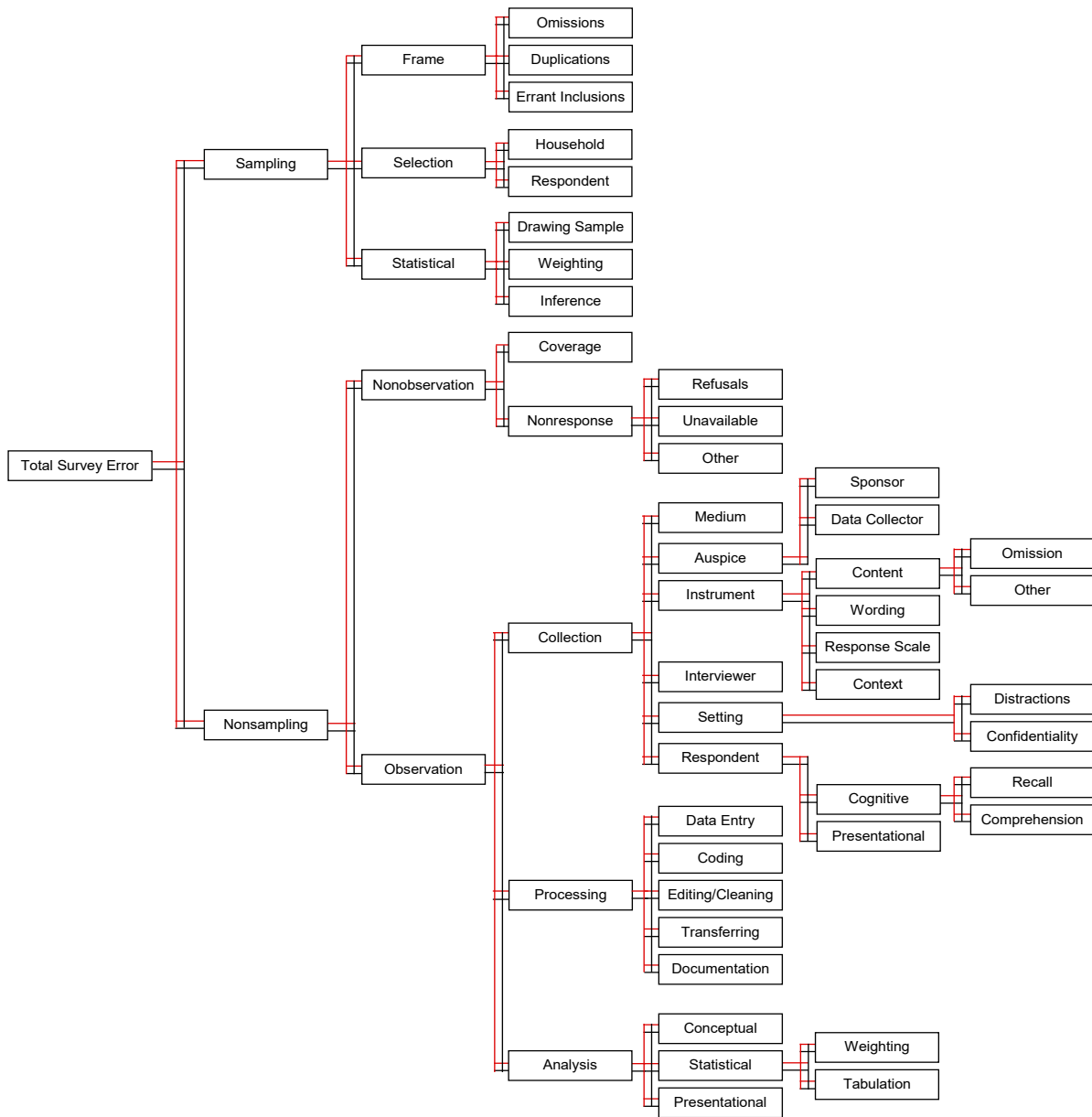
# **EPIISODE 1 TSE & MANAGEMENT**

- Is there a place for management (including organization) in TSE?

# Total Survey Error Components Linked to Steps in the Measurement and Representational Inference Process (Groves et al. 2004).



Robert M. Groves, and Lars Lyberg *Public Opin Q*  
2010;74:849-879



Smith, 2016 3MC volume forthcoming

# Hybrid organization: Operations and Project Management

- Surveys have a hybrid organizational form
- A survey operations department provides continuous survey production
- A specific survey is often called a project and organized accordingly
- But in reality its both a continuous workflow and has a specific start and ending point

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**EPIISODE 2 3MC SURVEYS AS  
MUTLI-SITE PRODUCTION UNITS**

# 3MC Management and Organization not comparable to mono-surveys

- 3MC is not a one company enterprise
- 3MC is created on multiple sites, often contractors
- 3MC Director has to forge a unified workforce

- 3MC Director not empowered as CEO
- 3MC personnel not trained in cross-cultural multi-site management

# **EPIISODE 3 – SOME MISHAPS ....**

# A

- In a comparative survey (3MC) one country decided to add just one response category to an item.

The respective variable was kicked out of the comparative data file.

- One country had an extremely short fielding period but reported nearly 80% response rate.

No measures were taken.

# B

- In a nationwide survey the overall response rate dropped from one wave to the next by about 15%.

None of the standard causes applied.

- In a nationwide survey interviewers were instructed to work with priority specific cases.

But they did not.

# C

- Yesterday Ineke Stoop reported that interviews in one country took on average very short time

They often were conducted at the doorstep.

It took some 15 years to find that out.

# Is this ...

- Accidental?
- Episodic ?
- Systematic?



# At A

- *In a comparative survey (3MC) one country decided to add just one response category to an item.*
- Management problem: local team did not understand the damage made by their idiosyncratic decision
- Management problem: Director of 3MC had not the power to enforce uniformity

# At B

- *In a nationwide survey the overall response rate dropped from one wave to the next by about 15%.*
- Management problem: Field manager was not aware of a drop in interviewer performance from average 7 to 6 (=15%)
- Management problem: Manager not verse in dashboard applications

# At C

- *Yesterday Ineke Stoop reported that interviews in one country took on average very short time*
- Management problem: 3MC director avoided to talk to field directors

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# **EPIISODE 4 – 3MC MANAGEMENT**

# Misconceptions in 3MC management

- 3MC Director often misunderstood as coordinator
- 3MC Director has no clear responsibilities, reporting not effective
- 3MC Director not trained in multi-site cross-cultural management
- 3MC Director often not aware of HR, Cross-cultural management etc.

# Effects of mis-management on TSE

- Losing 1 item effects overall comparability of a measurement instrument (set of items)
- It can amount up to 1.000.000\$ in costs (time to document, time lost by analysts, power of analyses etc.)
- It could be avoided by implementing simple, straightforward management rules
- **Consensual decisions are the rule. If no consensus can be achieved – the director decides**

**LOOKING FORWARD**



- Adding management specifications to guidelines and work definitions
  - Who says what to whom?
  - Where stops the buck?
- Example?
  - TRAPD translation/adaptation guidelines
  - Clear role models (translator, reviewer, adjudicator)
  - Clear power structure

# Next steps

- New governance structures for 3MC
- Local teams will be “branches” of one (virtual) company
- Assignment of special directors for major tasks in the survey life cycle
- Most pressing: 3MC Field Director ....

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Thank you !